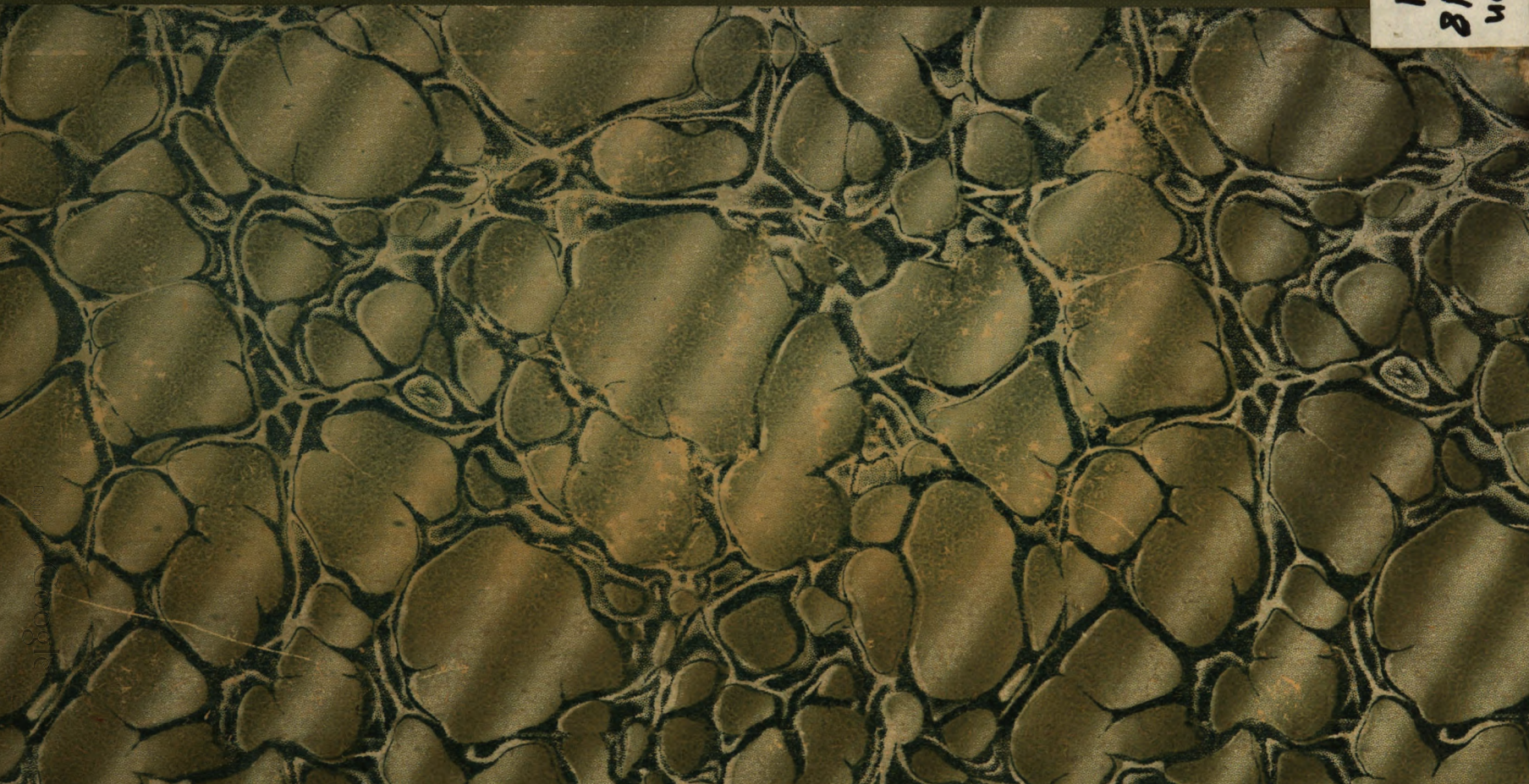
Plumer - Address - 1821.



AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE ROCKINGHAM

AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY,

October 18th, 1821.

By WILLIAM PLUMER, Jr.

EXETER:
PRINTED BY JOHN J. WILLIAMS.
1821.

VOTED, that JOHN ROGERS, CLEMENT STORER and JONATHAN CLARKE, Esquirs, be a Committee to wait on the Hon. WILLIAM PLUMER, Jr. and thank him for his able, eloquent and practical Address, delivered before the ROCKINGHAM AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY this day; and request a copy for the press.

Attest, JOSEPH S. GILMAN, *Sec'y.*

Exeter, 18th October, 1821.

ADDRESS.

IT has been remarked, Fellow Citizens, in praise of Agriculture, that it is an art peculiar to man. Inferior animals have indeed an instinct, which teaches them to hoard, for future use, the food spontaneously produced by nature. But to sow and plant, to cultivate the soil, to vary and increase its produce, to create as well as collect, the means of subsistence, may justly be regarded as the exclusive prerogative of our rational nature. The extent to which these agricultural operations are carried, and the consequences which follow necessarily in their train, form the chief distinctions between the civilized and the savage state. The hunter, wherever found, is a savage—the herdsman, in every age, a barbarian; but the planter and the farmer are civilized and social beings. Permanent wealth, like that in lands, can neither be obtained, nor enjoyed by any people till the habit of regular industry is formed and established among them; and this habit no where exists till man begins to cultivate the earth. Its importance is then immediately perceived; for if there is any one lesson taught the husbandman more clearly than another, it is the necessity of continued labour, and the advantages of regular and unwearied industry. He has received from the bounty of nature only what

his own exertions could not provide. She has given him wild fruits, which culture must meliorate; and a stubborn soil, which labour must subdue, and skill improve. Without these, the earth yields him a scanty and precarious subsistence; with them, it supplies largely all his reasonable wants.

I have adverted to the peculiar character of agriculture, as connected with the civilization and improvement of society, not because it admits of doubt, or requires proof or illustration; but because the exertions, necessary for the advancement and perfection of this parent-art, can be expected to spring only from a deep and thorough conviction of its pre-eminent importance, as the abundant source both of national wealth and individual happiness. Nor is this conviction less necessary to the farmer himself, than to other classes of the community; since he who does not think highly of his own calling or profession, whatever it may be, will make no uncommon exertions for its improvement, nor feel any very lively interest in its general welfare and success. In this point of view, the institution of Agricultural Societies, and the public meetings and exhibitions to which they lead, are of essential service to agriculture, as they tend to raise the character and improve the condition of the farmer; and by securing to his pursuit its just rank and influence in society, do much towards preserving him from the ignorance, the poverty, and consequent servitude, into which, in other countries, the cultivators of the soil have too often fallen.

Particular circumstances render these public meetings more necessary to farmers than to any other class

of men. Merchants and Manufacturers are collected in towns and cities, where great numbers come daily together; and activity and emulation are easily excited and preserved. With them, therefore, the sense of a common interest is constant and intense. Improvements made by one are immediately known and adopted by all the rest; in every new undertaking, the best models are followed; and the progress of society is seldom retarded by an obstinate attachment to old methods, after new and more convenient ones have been invented. This readiness to improve—this ambition of excellence, and quick instinct of interest—is always produced by the presence of multitudes in the same place; and is the natural result of the alternate union and opposition of many kindred minds, of numbers warmed by collision, roused by difficulties, intent upon the same object, and eager in the pursuit of one common good. Agriculture, on the contrary, seems almost deprived of this mainspring of action. Farmers live necessarily at a distance from each other, and pursue their humble, but useful labours, in the solitude of forests, and amidst the silence of nature; with few friends to applaud their success, or rivals to call forth, by competition, new efforts of skill or fresh exertions of industry. It is to supply this want of emulation, to rouse this sluggish indifference of spirit, and present more powerful motives to rural activity and enterprise, that Agricultural Societies have been recently formed in different parts of our country, and premiums offered, for proofs of uncommon success, in the various branches of practical husbandry.

The more any pursuit is made the subject of general enquiry and scientific arrangement, the higher it rises in the scale of improvement, and the greater dignity and importance it acquires. Unfortunately for agriculture, it has, from the earliest ages, been more practiced as an *art*, than studied as a *science*. It seems indeed to have been taken for granted, that this most extensive and difficult of all the arts, could be brought to perfection, without those aids of science, to which others owe their chief success. The greatest improvements in many, if not all, the arts of life, are acknowledged to have been made, not by persons engaged immediately, and exclusively, in the practice of those arts; but by men of extensive information and general science, whose minds were enlarged by study and trained to a careful survey and intimate acquaintance with the various objects of human knowledge. Proofs of this position might easily be adduced. The mariner traverses the ocean, by the aid of instruments, which he did not invent, and of tables, whose principles he does not understand; but which were discovered, and adapted to his use, by men who never set foot on board a ship, and who knew nothing of navigation beyond its theory. The same dependance of art on science might, if necessary, be instanced in many agricultural processes. It ought, therefore, Gentlemen, to be our study, as it is the object of our Society, to encourage agriculture, by a judicious combination of science and practice; to excite enquiry, and impart information; to suggest new experiments, and communicate the result of those already tried; to rouse, by premiums and honorary rewards, a spirit of honest

pride and generous emulation; to cherish, in the farmer, an ambition—the wisest he can indulge—to excel his neighbours, in the amount and goodness of his crops, in the breed and fatness of his cattle, in his mode of doing business, and in the general appearance, order and neatness of his farm; in a word, it should be our endeavour to render agriculture more regular and systematic in its arrangements, more certain and profitable in its returns, and consequently an object of more general attention and greater regard.

The leading principles of agriculture are the same in all countries. The object every where pursued should be, with a given amount of labour and expence, to obtain from the earth the greatest possible amount of produce which, without empoverishment, it can be made to yield. The means employed for this purpose must indeed vary with the soil and climate, and the kind of crops intended to be raised; but these are principally matters of detail, and do not materially effect the great outlines of a good system of husbandry, which being derived from nature, are uniform and invariable. To drain the earth of its superfluous moisture; to keep it loose and clean, by frequent ploughing and careful cultivation; to enrich it by suitable manures; to select the crops best adapted to the different kinds of soil; and to vary and assist them, by a judicious rotation;—these few operations, plain and obvious as they appear, form, of themselves, a system of husbandry, which is at once simple, comprehensive, and distinct. A few remarks, under each of these heads, will enable us, at the same time, to

bring into view some of the most important principles of agriculture, and to notice briefly some of the leading defects of our own practice.

I. DRAINING.—To drain the earth of its superfluous moisture, though an obvious dictate of reason, has been, in general, so little practiced in this state, that draining is hardly considered, among us, as a regular agricultural operation. And yet in countries, where the earth has been cultivated with the most success, this branch of improvement has always been considered as of the first importance. "Lay your "land dry," says a celebrated English farmer, "before "you attempt any thing else." A due proportion of moisture is indeed necessary to the growth of plants; and there are some soils, composed principally of sand and gravel, in which draining is not only useless, but might be injurious. But on most farms there is much land, which is, every fall and spring, filled with water; and thus rendered cold, sour, and unproductive, for want of drains and ditches to convey off the stagnant mass. Our low lands are thus converted into swamps and morasses, of little or no value to the owner, though in themselves capable of being made the richest parts of the farm. The waters collected in these bogs and pools serve, in wet seasons, to drown the land, and in dry, to infect the air. Both health and profit equally require their speedy removal.

Wherever the soil rests on a bottom of clay, or compact sand, as is the case with much of our low land, the water which falls upon it, or runs in from the surrounding hills, being unable to enter this impervious substratum, must remain upon the surface, till evap-

trated by the sun. But this evaporation does not take place, till long after the proper season for sowing and planting has passed. These operations are, therefore, usually performed, on such lands, while the earth is still wet and cold; and the seed, thus sown or planted, either rots in the ground, or comes up so late and imperfect, as hardly to repay the cost of cultivation. In such cases, a little time judiciously employed in constructing drains, and opening ditches, would add more value to the land, than twice the amount of labour spent upon any other part of the farm. Nor is it to be apprehended that, on higher lands, the earth will be deprived, by draining, of any moisture which is either necessary or useful to the soil. It is to the copious dews, and gentle rains that fall from May to October, that the farmer is indebted for his crops, so far as water is concerned in their production; and these he is in no danger of losing by the course here recommended. But the floods of spring, and the long drenching rains of autumn, which inundate his low lands, and render his fields cold and unproductive, should never be suffered to stagnate within his bounds; but should be provided with an easy and ample outlet, wherever the situation of the land admits (as it generally does) of being drained.

II. Tillage.—Having thus provided against the excesses of the watery element, the farmer's next object should be to keep his lands loose and clean, by frequent ploughing, and careful cultivation. The earth, in its natural state yields a supply, worthless and scanty compared with that, which the skill and labour of man enable him to draw from its bosom.

This increase of produce rises principally from the manner in which the soil is prepared for the reception of seed and the growth of the intended crop. For this purpose, it is a settled maxim of agriculture, that *the finer, and deeper the tilth, the better and more productive the husbandry.* The finer the particles of matter are divided, the more readily will they assume the forms of vegetable life, and the more copious is the supply which they furnish as food to plants. To loosen, divide, and pulverize the soil, in every possible form, and to the utmost practical extent, is therefore, the first great step towards rendering it fertile and productive. This can be effected only by a constant and liberal use of the plough,—that most important of all agricultural implements,—which never runs without enriching its owner.

But the quality of the soil should not only be improved, but its depth increased: and this must be done by deep, as the former, by frequent ploughing. The sun and air exert a steady and powerful influence upon whatever substances fall under their action; and it is to this influence that the earth is indebted for much of its fertility. The deeper therefore land is ploughed, provided it be done gradually from year to year, so as not to bring up too much dead earth at once, the more its value is increased, and the greater will be its returns to the diligent cultivator. The object of ploughing being to obtain a fine mould, it ought to be done principally, in the fall, that our severe and frequent frosts, which are, in other respects, so injurious to the farmer, may here come in aid of human industry; and the great process of deepening and pulverizing

the soil, be carried on by the elements, almost without the labour of man. If the land be low and wet, it should be thrown into ridges, as well as ploughed, in the fall, that it may not suffer from the water.

Nor are these the only good effects of deep and frequent ploughing. The careful husbandman suffers nothing to encumber his ground, which does not add to its value. To prevent the growth of weeds is therefore, with him, an object scarcely less important, than to promote the growth of corn or grain. The necessity of destroying them, when they appear, is admitted by all: but this after-prudence, by which evils are attacked only when they have reached their maturity, is surely much inferior to that preventive wisdom, which foresees the evil, and prevents its existence. By shallow ploughing, the seeds of grass and weeds, with which the earth is always full, are deposited near the surface, ready to spring up with the intended crop, and requiring much time and labour to keep them down. By deep ploughing, on the contrary, they are buried so low in the earth, that few of them ever quicken into life; and those few pierce the surface, so late in the season, as to do little injury to the harvest. A constant, liberal, and judicious use of the plough may, therefore, be recommended as the best means of promoting the growth of plants, while it prevents the growth of weeds; of deepening the soil, by exposing all its parts to the sun and air; and thus of rendering it loose and friable, pervious to the roots of plants, and ready to give forth all its strength in the production of useful crops.

III. MANURES.—But however well the earth may be prepared, by these means, for the purposes of agri-

culture, it must in time be exhausted, by a continued course of cropping, if its fertility be not preserved and sustained, by the application of suitable manures.—The food of plants is derived either from the earth, air, or water; and the proportion drawn from each depends upon the nature of the plant. Some plants derive their chief support from the atmosphere, and will grow and flourish, at least for a time, without even touching the ground; others live only in water or on its surface: but the greater part require the combined aid of all three to sustain and perfect their growth. The favourable effects of water upon plants are well known and obvious. A heavy dew, or a slight fall of rain, revives vegetation, and gives a refreshing glow and animation to the face of nature. These agents are, however, very little subject to the power of man. In our rough and uneven country, and in the present state of our agriculture, irrigation could not generally be attempted with any prospect of success. We may indeed guard against the bad effects of too much water, by draining; but cannot expect to collect it in tanks, as in India; or to lead it, as in Lombardy and other parts of Europe, in ducts and canals, to irrigate and refresh our thirsty soils.

With respect to the fertilizing influence of the air, or rather of the putrescent matter floating in the atmosphere, the only method by which we can avail ourselves of it, in greater abundance than is spontaneously furnished by nature, is to cultivate such plants as have a peculiar attraction for this floating manure, and absorb it, from the air, more copiously than others. This is the case generally with broad-leaved and wide-spreading

plants, which, drawing their nutriment principally from air and water, are, on that account, less exhausting to the soil. It is to its peculiar power of enabling plants to extract, and transfer to the earth, this inexhaustible wealth of the atmosphere, that *Gypsum*, or Plaster of Paris, seems to owe its principal value as an agricultural agent. It accordingly produces the greatest effects on dry or calcarious soils, where a deficiency of moisture is usually felt; and succeeds best when applied to clover, corn, and other large plants. Ashes is another manure which seems to act, something in the same way, by its power to attract moisture from the atmosphere; and therefore does best, where this moisture is most wanted, on light lands with a loose or gravelly soil.

But it is principally on the nutriment drawn from the earth, that the husbandman must rely, for the goodness of his crops. His great object here, is to extract much produce, with little empoverishment to the soil. For if he loses, in the value of his lands, what he gains in the amount of his crops, his industry is worse than useless; and he is becoming daily poorer by his labour. Much good land has been in this way destroyed, for want of considering that the earth requires food as well as man; and that a field may be starved, if not as quickly, yet as certainly, as an ox or a horse. Any course of husbandry which leaves the land, year after year, worse than it was before, must be pronounced decidedly bad; to keep it where it was, is barely tolerable; and it cannot be called good, if every year does not render it richer and more productive than the last. By returning the whole crop to the ground on which it grew,

the strength of the soil would not only be preserved, but its fertility increased. It is in this way, that lands in a state of nature are enriched, by the mere progress of vegetation, and are always found eminently productive by the first cultivators. But to raise crops, with no other view than merely to enrich his lands, would be of no service to the farmer. He ought however always to recollect, that if, for any length of time, he would preserve his lands in good heart, under constant cultivation, he must bestow upon them, in the form of manure, animal and vegetable matter, equal to that taken from them in the form of crops.

Nor is this so difficult to be effected as might at first be supposed. Beside the ordinary supplies of the barnyard, upon which I need not here enlarge, the refuse of his crops, which though useless to him, is invaluable to his lands, and the aid which may be derived from lime, gypsum, salt, marl, and other extrinsic sources,—our swamps, and meadows, and low lands, are every where filled with a rich mass of vegetable mould, which may be truly pronounced inestimable in value, as it is inexhaustible in amount. It has been here accumulating, for ages, from the decay of vegetables, the fall of leaves and trees, and the wash of the surrounding lands. Into these neglected nooks, and dark recesses of his farm, the industrious husbandman ought to dig as for mines of gold. If rightly improved, they will furnish him with the means of restoring vigour to his exhausted lands, of preserving those that are still unimpaired, and enable him, by the aid of drains, to convert his useless wastes into fertile fields. I need hardly remark how few among us have availed themselves, in its full extent, of this great source of agricultural improvement.

IV. ADAPTATION OF CULTURE TO THE NATURE OF THE SOIL.—The nice adaptation of trees and plants to the different soils and climates in which each is found spontaneously to grow, and their tendency to degenerate when removed to any other, render it, in all countries, an object of great importance to ascertain what crops are best suited to the nature of their respective climates, and the kinds of soil, in which each most delights to dwell. Much labour has been every where lost from not sufficiently consulting the character and disposition of plants, and giving to each the position, food, and culture, which, in its original state, it was designed to receive. Vegetable productions, admit indeed of great improvement, both in amount and quality, from the labour and skill of man; but this improvement must be made, not by opposing nature, but by seconding her efforts, acting upon her plan, and following the direction which she indicates.

The plants generally cultivated among us are, probably, with some few exceptions, better suited to our wants, and to the nature of our soil and climate, than any which could be imported from abroad. But it is not sufficient for the perfection of this branch of agriculture, that the most suitable grains and roots be selected for cultivation. Beside choosing, for his chief crops, those which agree best with the nature of his soil, the farmer ought to recollect that there are innumerable varieties of the same plant,—among which it should be his object to cultivate only the most valuable; since the best variety, in each species, is, in general, as easy to raise as the worst; and the difference between them often amounts, both in product and qual-

ity, to nearly half the crop. The difference in the profit which they yield is still greater. Let us suppose, for instance, every fourth bushel of corn, wheat, or potatoes raised, to be the farmer's profit,—the other three going to pay the cost of cultivation, and other expences of the farm. In this case, he who plants seed which yields only a quarter more than the common kinds, will receive just twice as much profit, from the same land, as his neighbours do, though their labour and expence equal his. To double his profits without increasing his expences, is surely an object worth any man's attention. Yet in very many cases, this might certainly be done, by a little care, in selecting among cattle, the best breeds—among plants, the best variety of the intended kind—and among our lands, those best suited to the crops respectively raised on each.

V. Rotation of Crops.—But the leading principle of agriculture, to which almost all others are subservient, remains yet to be mentioned—I mean, the succession, or, as it is usually called the rotation of crops. That the same plants will grow in succession, for a certain number of times, on a particular spot of ground, and then begin to languish and finally cease to be supported by it, while others of a different species will spring up and flourish rankly on the same spot, are facts which admit of no doubt, because proved by frequent experiments and daily observation. The reason of this change, in the productions of the earth, seems to be, that different plants require different kinds of food; so that the soil which will no longer yield, because it does not possess, the sustenance sought by one, may yet supply, in abundance, that which some

other requires and could alone receive. This tendency of the earth to change, from year to year, its growth and produce, first led observing men to the idea of a succession, or rotation of crops, which should conform, in some measure, to the order and variety exhibited in the spontaneous productions of nature. Hence the leading maxim, in this branch of husbandry is, that *two exhausting crops of the same kind*, as of corn or wheat, for instance, *should never follow each-other, in immediate succession, on the same land.* This maxim, like all general truths, admits of some exceptions; but it is at the same time true that, where it has been adopted the most beneficial effects have resulted, and that, where it has been generally neglected, agriculture, as a science, has been little understood, and its practice, as an art, has been extremely rude and imperfect. A judicious rotation of crops may, therefore, be considered as the necessary basis of every good system of agricultural improvement.

Among plants which we are obliged to raise, some are found to improve, others to empoverish the land; some bind and harden, others loosen and separate the soil. The great object should be to adjust these several crops, one to the other, in such an order, as that each, instead of injuring, may prepare the soil for that which is to follow;—or, if this cannot be always done, the rotation should, at least, be so arranged, as that the bad effects of one may, as far as possible, be obviated by the good qualities of another; and the land, by this variety and intermixture, be preserved always in good heart, yet made to yield the greatest possible profits, consistent with its continued productiveness. If these

principles be correct, and they will hardly be denied by any good farmer, it is obvious to remark, how defective is our own practice, in this essential branch of husbandry. How often do we see three or four exhausting crops taken in succession from the same land with very little aid from the plough or from manure, and with no regard to the intermixture and rotation of crops. Where lands, exhausted by this injudicious course, are, at length, laid down to grass, their product as might have been foreseen, is small and inconsiderable; and yet the owner, instead of learning wisdom from experience, often completes his round of folly, by wondering why his fields are so barren, and his hay hardly worth the labour of cutting. The real wonder is, that, with such management, they should produce any thing at all.

It is not the least among the advantages attending the systematic course of husbandry, which I have endeavoured to recommend, that it enables, or rather compels, the farmer to give all his lands an equal chance for improvement; instead of exhausting a few favorite spots, and depending, as is often done, from year to year, for the course next to be pursued, upon accident or caprice; or at best, upon a short-sighted calculation of temporary profit, in which the permanent improvement of the whole farm is sacrificed to the expectation, often fallacious, of an increased product for the present season. The tenant who holds his lease for a single year, may find it for his interest to increase the present crop, at the expense of those which are to follow it; but the owner of the soil can have no such interest. In adding to its fertility, he augments his

own wealth; while by robbing or starving his lands, he is himself empoverished. With us, farmers are lords of the soil they cultivate; and this fixed interest in the land ought to render them more active, industrious, and skilful in their occupation, than those of any other country. Here, they are freeholders; in other countries, they are generally tenants. In the former case, there is an immediate, in the latter, only a remote connexion, between their own wealth and the permanent improvement of the soil. It has been accordingly remarked by Montesquieu, that "countries are cultivated, not in proportion to their *fertility*, but to "their *liberty*." "Give a man" says Arthur Young, "the secure possession of a bleak rock, and he will "turn it into a garden: give him a nine years lease of "a garden, and he will convert it into a desert."

That these remarks are not more fully verified in our own country, is principally owing to the boundless extent of our unsettled territory, which, by rendering land cheap, tempts the husbandman to cultivate many acres badly, instead of a few well. Nearly all the defects of our agriculture may indeed be traced to this fruitful source of error. In the early settlement of the country, there was no want of land, but a very great want of men. The object with the first settlers, was, therefore, to spread their labour over as large a surface as possible. The permanent improvement of the soil was, with them, an object of no importance. When one spot was stripped and plundered of its wealth,—the wealth of ages, accumulated on its surface,—another was at hand, as cheap as the former, and of unexhausted fertility. While engaged in clearing up

new lands, and struggling with the difficulties of a new country, much system or regularity was hardly to be expected. But this excuse for bad husbandry, once so valid, can be no longer justly urged, at least, in the lower parts of the state. A new era has accordingly arisen in our agriculture, produced by the increase of our population, the diminution of foreign commerce, and the sudden growth of manufactures amongst us.

With this change of circumstances, a spirit of activity and improvement has displayed itself, which, if properly directed, will produce the most happy results for the whole community. If any inducement, to assist in giving it this direction, could be wanted, beyond that found in the pleasure and profit of the pursuit, it would be perceived, by every generous mind, in the peculiar value which even small improvements in agriculture possess, on account of the immense number to whom the benefit of such improvements accrues. Great favours conferred on a few, contribute less to human happiness, than small advantages which reach to many. The erection of a palace, though at the expence of millions, is an achievement of less importance to mankind, than an improvement, however small, in the form or structure of the plough, by means of which four oxen should perform the labour now required of six. In the former case the pride of one man only would be gratified; in the latter, a whole nation is enriched.—That such improvements may be made, cannot be doubted by those who know what has been already done. We read in scripture, that when Elijah went to meet Elisha, he found the proph-

et in a field "ploughing with *twelve* yoke of oxen." We are not told how many men it took to drive, nor how many more to hold this unwieldly plough; but we may judge something of its rudeness of construction, by the team which it required. The Indians, when this country was first discovered, broke up their land with a stake, and had no better hoe than a clam-shell.

When we compare these rude inventions with our present agricultural implements, (imperfect as these latter still are,) we can be at no loss to decide who were the greatest benefactors of mankind—those ingenious mechanics, who first turned the stake of the savage into a plough, and by subsequent improvements reduced the team from twelve to two yoke of oxen,—or those sanguinary warriors, who, to enslave nations, converted ploughshares into swords, and, to feed their rapacious armies, robbed the husbandman of his harvest. Yet the former are forgotten or despised, while the latter are remembered and admired. The same misapplication of applause, on the one hand, and exertion, on the other, may be traced in every walk of life. Half the ingenuity expended, in vain, upon the *perpetual motion*, would have supplied us with innumerable implements of husbandry, more perfect than any we now possess; and a tenth part of the time and talent devoted to astrology, to the transmutation of metals, or the *elixir vitae*, would have discovered the various properties of soils, and made us familiar with the best modes of farming. The art of making cyder,—the best and healthiest of our liquors,—is still in its infancy; while that of making rum, whose deadly poison

sends thousands yearly to the grave, has been for centuries perfectly understood!

It is the duty of every man, in civil society, to add something to the stock of human happiness,—to perform some action, by which virtue may be advanced, knowledge increased, or wealth acquired. Great acts and splended achievements fall not to the lot of many to perform; but useful and virtuous deeds are within the reach of all; and such is the necessary connection between private happiness and public prosperity, that the farmer, in improving the value of his property, augments the wealth and resources of his country; and in acquiring agricultural knowledge and reducing it to practice, becomes a better citizen, in proportion as he is a wiser man. There is scarcely a farmer in New-Hampshire, who could not, by a little system in the disposal of his time and labour, do something, every year, beyond the current business of the season, which should entitle him to say at its close, "My farm is worth more now, than it was twelve months ago. I have not therefore lived, this year, in vain." He who, in ordinary times, cannot truly say this, hardly deserves the name of a good and prudent farmer.

The connection of virtue with regular industry, and of happiness with the gradual acquisition of property, is among the kindest and most benevolent of the dispensations of providence to man. He who from want of system and economy in his pursuits, adds nothing to his fortune, but is every day becoming poorer and more dependent, will be rarely found to be either a very happy man, or a very useful member of society. Acquiring nothing permanent by his industry, he takes

little satisfaction in his business or profession, whatever it may be; and can never experience those *pleasures of gain*—of constant, regular, though moderate gain—which every thrifty farmer feels; and which,—however nobler minds may be swayed by higher motives—contributes, more than honor, wealth, or power, to make the mass of men cheerful, happy, and contented, industrious in their own pursuits, friendly in their intercourse with others, and useful, virtuous, and upright, in the various relations of social life.

For such men, vice and folly, extravagance and dissipation, the waste of luxury, and the *idleness which bringeth want*, possess but few attractions. Occupied incessantly with some useful labour, or some innocent enjoyment, they have no need of scandal to amuse their vacant hours; envy comes not to corrode their tempers, nor disappointed ambition to corrupt their hearts. The idler finds them too busy for vice, and the demagogue too happy for factious discontent. Exempt from the noise and tumult of the bustling croud, they enjoy, in calm contemplation, the beauties, and the bounties of nature, before which the works of art, and the schemes of ambition, vanish and are forgotten. In the quiet dignity of rural retirement, they are wise, without the parade of learning; powerful, without a wish to injure, and happy, without the pomp of office, or the ensigns of power. It might be thought too much to say, that he who conducts, with perfect skill and judgment, all the complicated concerns of an extensive farm, might as well direct an army, or govern a state. And yet the one talent is, perhaps, as rare as the other, and the perfect farmer

as seldom found as the able general, or accomplished statesman. His value is at least equal to theirs; and if rank depended upon utility, the place assigned him, in public estimation, would not be less distinguished.

But I perceive that fondness for my subject has led me to incroach too far upon your patience. My object has been to notice only such leading topics, as relate to the general interests and welfare of agriculture; and in doing this, I have preferred correctness to novelty, though at the expence of repeating many observations, familiar to most of my hearers. For in relation to agriculture, as to morals, men require to be reminded, rather than informed, of their duty; and I have supposed that this might be better done, by bringing before you known and acknowledged truths, than by advancing new or doubtful theories. Yet I feel that even in this respect, I have failed to perform the task assigned me, in a manner worthy of your acceptance, or satisfactory to myself; and have therefore, in conclusion, to crave pardon for many crude remarks and imperfect suggestions—happy, on this occasion, if in my zeal to advance so good a cause, I have not betrayed an ignorance of my subject, too great even for your kindness to forgive.